

New Jersey

Language Arts Literacy

Curriculum Framework



Chapter 5

Activities for Language Arts Literacy



ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY

Each of the New Jersey language arts literacy standards is elaborated by a set of progress indicators that identify specifically what students should know and be able to do as they work towards achieving that standard by the end of grades 4, 8, and 12. The activities on the following pages illustrate ways in which teachers guide students toward that proficiency. These activities represent a spectrum of instructional approaches that target a diverse student population and that show a continuum of learning from grades K through 12. Activity clusters for each indicator reflect a spiraling of experiences designed to build upon developmental differences.

The description for each activity assumes that the teacher has already presented the literacy skills necessary for success with the activity through structured lessons that provide direct instruction, modeling, and guided feedback. The descriptions also assume that teachers will use these activities as a means for observing student proficiency, identifying additional instructional needs, and extending student understanding and achievement in the content standards and progress indicators for language arts literacy.

The activities serve as suggestions. They are meant to be adapted to students' instructional needs. We need to approach each suggested activity with the questions, "How can I use this activity with my students? What material am I already using that will lend itself to this activity? What else am I doing to develop student achievement in this indicator?" By using this decision-making process, we make these activities our own.

Each activity is preceded by the letter **(E)**, **(M)**, or **(S)**. These letters correspond to the progress indicator designations: (E) Elementary grades K–4; (M) Middle School grades 5–8; and (S) Secondary level grades 9–12. Although these letters suggest specific instructional levels, the activities themselves may be used with modifications at other levels.

LISTENING

STANDARD 3.2 ALL STUDENTS WILL LISTEN ACTIVELY IN A VARIETY OF SITUATIONS TO INFORMATION FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES.

Descriptive Statement: Through active listening, students gain understanding and appreciation of language and communication. They develop an awareness of the role of sound, including intonation, rhythm, pace, enunciation, volume, and quality, in combination with words and/or visual presentations to convey meaning. Effective listeners are able to restate, interpret, respond to, and evaluate increasingly complex messages conveyed through sound. Students should have opportunities to listen to language used for a variety of purposes including telling a story, sharing information, questioning, persuading, and helping others to achieve goals. Students should recognize that what they say, write, read, and view contributes to the content and quality of their listening experiences.

CUMULATIVE PROGRESS INDICATORS

1. Use speaking, writing, reading, and viewing to assist with listening.

- (E) Prior to a teacher read-aloud of a familiar story, the class discusses elements of story grammar: characters, problems, potential solutions, barriers, and outcomes. As the teacher reads the story, the students take notes for each part of the grammar and make personal associations with the story. Afterwards, students compare their reactions to the story.
- (E) In preparation for reading *The Sign of the Beaver*, small groups of students use the library media center to research Native American histories, cultures, and beliefs about nature. Using their research as a guide, they construct an interview form to use as they interview a Native American. They either travel to a reservation or, with teacher guidance and parental approval, use the Internet to locate individuals willing to be interviewed. Afterwards, they write a report based on their findings.
- (E) As part of their study of New Jersey state government, fourth graders conduct telephone interviews with their local legislators using the speaker phone in the principal's office. First, they read newspaper reports, their textbook, and *New Jersey Monthly Magazine* articles to determine the questions they will ask their legislators. After discussing their questions, they draft, revise, and edit them and decide who will ask each question. Then they devise a recording form allowing them to take accurate notes as they listen attentively during the telephone interviews. With the legislators' permission, students also audiotape the conversations for future listening.
- (M) Students listen to the audio portion of a videotaped performance without viewing the picture. They compare with a partner the visual images they each imagined while listening and write brief notes about the similarities and differences between their visual images. They then view the videotape and compare what they imagined with what they saw.
- (M) Students are requested to take notes on a class lecture. The students have read about the topic. During the lecture, the teacher highlights key points by putting outline notes on the board to assist the students with notetaking.



- (M) In an effort to have students consider how stories are constructed, the teacher first shows the class a television commercial without sound, then he plays the same advertisement with sound and no picture. In the first situation, the students write what story they see. In the second, students write what story they hear. The teacher records students' comments, using a Venn diagram to show similarities and differences between viewing and listening.
- (S) As background for reading *The Grapes of Wrath*, students research various aspects of the Depression in the library media center. Students use what they learn from their research as a basis for composing questions to use in interviews with senior citizens who lived during the Depression. Afterwards, they share information before reading the novel.
- (S) In preparation for reading *Medea*, small groups of students research various aspects of Greek life including sports, the arts, architecture, the theater, and clothing. Each group prepares an oral presentation of its findings and includes visual aids.
- (S) During a lecture on the Elizabethan period in British literature, students take notes on points they feel are important. After the lecture, students compare notes with partners to identify similarities and differences. The pairs then share their findings with the whole class.

2. Demonstrate comprehension of a story, interview, and oral report of an event or incident.

- (E) Prior to listening to a story, interview, or report of an event, students discuss the topic, share prior knowledge about it, and offer predictions of what they will hear. The teacher lists their ideas on a chart. The students then hear the account and list what they have heard. They compare their prior knowledge to the new information.
- (E) A teacher prepares her class to listen to *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle and, afterwards, a brief nonfiction account that explains in greater detail how caterpillars become butterflies. The class is divided into groups, each with a different listening responsibility. One group is told to listen for how caterpillars live. The second group is told to listen for information about the cocoon, and the third group is asked to listen for what happens once the butterfly is born. Each group shares its information.
- (E) Students have been keeping observation notebooks in which they have recorded interesting things they have seen and heard. Behind a barrier, the teacher makes a sound, such as sharpening a pencil. Children are to infer what the sound is. Then the teacher shows the object to the class, and the students discuss whether they had enough information from the sound alone to identify the object. They talk about unusual sounds some objects make.
- (M) During Women's History month, the teacher expands student awareness of the changing roles of women and enhances listening skills by inviting women, including youth, adults, and senior citizens, to the class for an interview session. Students prepare interview questions designed to explore ways in which women's roles in society have changed over the past few generations. Students then interview the subjects, listen to their responses, ask follow-up questions, and draw conclusions as to how women's lives have changed. A subsequent class discussion provides students with feedback on their interviewing and listening skills and enables students to compare their reactions and conclusions to those of their classmates.



- (M) While the teacher reads an explanation of the events that led up to the first moon landing, students take notes. Then, the students work independently to create timelines that show the sequence of the important events that were included in the account.
- (M) In the library media center, students locate a brief newspaper article about a topic of interest. Each student reads his or her article aloud to a partner. After the reader has finished, the listener summarizes the main points of the article.
- (S) Students in small groups listen to a brief segment of a documentary video. After working independently to write what they remember of the event covered, students in the group compare what they have written.
- (S) Students listen to an account of a specific news event on both commercial radio and National Public Radio. They then compare the amount of time given to the event by each station, the amount of biased language found in each report, and the conclusion of each report. Students report their findings to the class.
- (S) Students invite men of different ages into class to discuss the changing roles of males in today's society. In preparation, students develop interview questions concerning the men's changing roles in relation to women and society and their opinions about the changes. Following these visits, students graph age-related differences in men's attitudes.

3. Listen for a variety of purposes, such as enjoyment and obtaining information.

- (E) Students in a primary class have been involved in shared reading of Maurice Sendak's *Chicken Soup with Rice*. Because this text is a collection of poems focusing on the different months of the year, the students and their teacher have been reading aloud the appropriate poem for each particular month. In January, the teacher uses a big book and reads the poem aloud twice. The second time, she directs students to listen for the predominance of the /s/ sound and /sl/ blend and to practice the sounds by echoing her reading. The text reads: "In January/it's so nice/while slipping/on the sliding ice/to sip hot chicken soup/with rice."
- (E) Students listen to a story without seeing its illustrations. Then the students illustrate what they envisioned from the story. They compare their illustrations with the originals.
- (E) Students stand near their classroom window. Without looking outside, they try to identify the many different sounds they hear. The teacher writes the students' suggestions on the board as they are made. Finally, students look out the window to see how many things they correctly identified. The teacher also verifies some sounds they may have heard, such as the noise of a garbage truck that may have moved since the activity began.
- (M) The teacher spends five minutes daily reading a poem or a segment of a long narrative poem to the class as part of a unit on poetry. Students record the titles read in their reading journals, along with brief responses. At the end of the unit, students review their responses before engaging in a discussion of the experience. Poems might include Robert Frost's "Mending Wall", Alfred Noyes' "The Highwayman", Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride", excerpts from *Beowulf*, sonnets by Shakespeare, Shel Silverstein's poetry, and the poems of Langston Hughes.



- (M) A teacher brings several fudge recipes to school. She asks students to listen for the differences they hear in the recipes while she reads them aloud. Students ask questions about each recipe after they are read, such as: How many will each recipe make? Are any of the ingredients hard to get? Which recipe has more chocolate? more sugar? After students decide which recipe sounds better, the students look at the written texts and decide how well they recalled the information. The class chooses its favorite recipe and, if possible, makes the fudge.
- (M) The teacher organizes and begins a listening game. She tells the students they must listen to and remember everything they hear. She tells the student she is going to demonstrate how to play and begins by introducing the formula, "I went to the store and bought one frog." Then, she picks one student to continue the game by repeating exactly what she said and adding two of something (e.g., "I went to the store and bought one frog and two ducks."). Each student, in turn, repeats the phrase and adds to the growing list of items. If a student forgets the sequence, the next student starts the game over from the beginning. The game continues until each student has successfully completed his or her turn or until fatigue sets in.
- (S) The teacher audiotapes a radio and television report of a news item and also videotapes the television newscast segment. Students first listen to the two tapes and compare the amount of information conveyed verbally by the two mediums. They sketch a picture of what they have learned from each tape and compare their sketches with those of a peer. Then they watch the videotape and discuss the effect of visual information on their comprehension of the event.
- (S) The teacher plays a recording of a song that students are not likely to know. Students try to write down images as they listen to the lyrics. Students then compare their images and consider that part of the poem that generated the image.
- (S) Groups of students prepare a brief selection from a play to read aloud to the class. Students take turns listening as each group presents its selection. Afterwards, students share their methods of preparation.

4. Interpret meaning through sounds, such as how speaking style reveals character in an oral interpretation.

- (E) As their teacher reads a story that they already know, students imagine the sound effects that could be used to enhance a radio reading of it. As a follow-up, students listen to an audiotape of the story, complete with sound effects. They note the sound effects used that they had suggested, as well as ones they had not considered.
- (E) After reading *The Farm Concert* by Joy Cowley, students are assigned the roles of the animals and respond to cues in the story that tell them when to make the appropriate sound.
- (E) Students draw character sketches as they listen to read-alouds of multiple versions of a fairy tale. The drawings should reflect differences in the characters as portrayed by the different authors. For instance, the wolf that is drawn based on listening to the *The True Story of the 3 Pigs as told by A. Wolf* should look different from that drawn for the traditional story.
- (M) The teacher assigns each member of the class a chapter of Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* to prepare to read to the class. Each student is asked to rehearse the reading so that listeners will be able to enjoy it and discuss what they heard afterwards. Students are invited to ask each other questions about variations in the characterization in each section read.



- (M) While listening to the concert version of *Peter and the Wolf*, students list the characters that appear and write down two or three adjectives for each one. Later, they share their adjectives in small groups.
- (M) The teacher prepares a series of such questions or statements as “Who are you?” “What do you want?” “I am going to school.” The students take turns asking questions or making statements to reflect different moods, such as happiness and anger. The class guesses which mood each student is representing.
- (S) Students listen to texts that exhibit use of dialect, such as *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* or *Beloved*. They then discuss the impact of dialect on conveying the humanity of the characters.
- (S) High school students have been learning about negative space and its potential effect in poetry. In listening to poetry, students note how they “fill in” silences in poems with their own thoughts, which they jot in their notebooks. For example, in hearing selections from the poem, “An Atlas for a Difficult World,” students keep track of the images, thoughts, questions, and associations they generate in the places where the reader pauses.
- (S) Students read aloud a passage that reveals character. The piece could contain dialect or detailed description. The listeners develop a verbal or visual character sketch based on what they have heard.

5. Listen attentively and critically to a variety of speakers.

- (E) Students dictate stories to the teacher, who records students’ ideas exactly as they have been told. The teacher reads back each story to the child who wrote it. The child is directed to listen carefully to decide whether anything should be added or changed. Students may identify parts they have left out, an awkward phrase, an inaccurate sequence of events, or misused words.
- (E) After completing a thematic unit on “Living in Communities,” students discuss what they have learned. The teacher or a pair of students web suggested ideas on the board, and these are entered into students’ learning logs as webs. Next, students brainstorm questions about the theme that remain unanswered and identify possible experts who could answer those questions. The students then either telephone the experts or invite them to class for an interview. After the interview, students record the new information on their web.
- (E) To review their understanding of the life cycle, students work in groups of four in a three-step interview. Students number off, and Student 1 interviews Student 2, while Student 3 interviews Student 4 about the chicken’s life stages from egg to chick. Next, Student 2 interviews 1, while student 4 interviews 3 about the butterfly’s life stages from egg to butterfly. Each student in turn then tells what he or she heard from the classmate interviewed. Students check for understanding by comparing the two versions of each cycle and using their books to resolve discrepancies. Students then determine the similar elements in the two cycles discussed and prepare to explain the identified similarities to the whole class.
- (M) After she assigns oral reports, the teacher conducts mini-lessons on (1) what makes a good oral report and (2) what positive, productive comments can be made about oral reports. As the students make presentations, their classmates rate and comment on the reports using guidelines discussed in the mini-lessons.

- (M) Students are given prompts that lend themselves to opposing points of view, such as “If you see a classmate cheat on a test, should you tell your teacher?” Pairs of students role-play opposing responses while the rest of the class listens to and takes notes on techniques used to persuade. After each role-play, the class discusses the effectiveness of points made and the credibility of the speaker’s communications.
- (M) Students participate as the audience during a class debate on a selected topic. Each audience member evaluates the outcomes of the debate and provides a written statement to the winning and losing side, offering reasons for the evaluation.
- (S) Students with similar research topics are paired for writing the final drafts of their research reports. They take turns reading their reports to each other and identify points that are unclear, repetitious, ungrammatical, or awkward. They also identify places where their information is similar and where it is different and attempt to resolve any contradictions by conducting research together.
- (S) Students work together to develop a rubric for good listening. They then rate themselves on their listening abilities and set personal goals for improvement. Periodically, the teacher presents a listening exercise and asks students to reevaluate themselves and set new personal goals for their listening.
- (S) As background for reading *The Canterbury Tales*, students prepare panel presentations of various aspects of life in the Middle Ages. As each group makes its presentation, the other students use a class-developed rubric to evaluate the group’s work for content, creativity, and oral delivery.



6. Develop listening strategies, such as asking relevant questions, taking notes, and making predictions, to understand what is heard.

- (E) After listening to the teacher read a segment of a short story, students write two or three “how” or “why” questions about the segment to ask their classmates. Students then discuss the selection, questioning and answering each other. Following the discussions, student predict future events as the teacher jots their ideas on a large chart. The teacher then resumes reading.
- (E) Following a student’s presentation of his/her writing in the Author’s Chair, classmates ask questions to clarify their understanding of the piece. Questions might include the following: Why did you decide to write about this topic? What did you mean when you wrote...? Why did you include _____ in your piece? I was confused when you read the part about.... Can you tell me more about that part?

- (E) The teacher demonstrates for students how to monitor their listening comprehension when listening to an audiotape of an informational passage and reading along with the text. She teaches students to stop the tape and mark the text with a removable stickie note for any words, phrases, or sections they find confusing. She shows them how to rewind, reread, and listen again in spots where their comprehension is disturbed. She tells them they can read on when they understand what they are reading. After they have listened to and read the passage, the teacher asks students to return to the marked portions of the text and helps them use available resources to clarify the points they still do not understand.
- (M) After brainstorming what the students know about the 1960s and identifying categories of information to research, the class is divided into study groups. Each group selects a subtopic of the general topic and divides the responsibility for researching aspects of it among the students. When the students bring their information back to the group, each student presents his or her research. The other students in the group ask questions, one group member takes notes, and the group organizes the information for a class presentation.
- (M) The teacher encourages students to discuss any information they know about a topic they will be studying. Next, she tells students they will be practicing their listening and note-taking skills by listening to her read a content area passage concerning that topic. She provides them with questions based on what they will hear, allows time for students to familiarize themselves with the questions, and then tells them she will read the passage three times. The first time, they simply listen. The second time, they try to write answers to the questions. During the third reading, students polish their answers. Afterwards, volunteers share what they have written.
- (M) Students listen to a narrative, persuasive, or informational selection has been tape recorded. Periodically, the teacher stops the tape and students to write or share their questions, responses, or predictions
- (S) Students watch an adult giving a speech, such as a guest speaker at a school, community board, or borough hall meeting. They take notes on ways in which the speaker emphasizes important points, such as hand gestures or tone of voice. They compare findings.
- (S) Students listen to a lecture about literature or about another area of study and take notes. After the lecture, students are divided into groups to compare the information they took notes on, making any revisions they feel are appropriate. Finally, as a whole class, students discuss what they recorded in their notes and come to consensus on what should have been recorded as main points and supporting ideas.
- (S) Students compose brief press releases about school events for the local newspaper. Each writer leaves out an important piece of information, such as the location of the concert or the time of the game. As each student reads his or her press release aloud, the rest of the class listens to determine what important piece of information is missing.



7. Follow oral directions.

- (E) Students follow oral directions with rhyme and songs, such as “Simon Says,” “The Hokey Pokey,” and “Bean Bag Song.”
- (E) A teacher has a publishing center in her classroom. Each child who successfully writes a story can go into the publishing center to listen to audiotaped directions on how to make a book. After the children publish their books, they read them to each other.
- (E) Children are visited by a young adult who is fluent in a language the children do not know. The classroom guest tells the children how to say several friendly phrases in this foreign language. Children practice the phrases and then role-play using the foreign language for greetings and expressions of courtesy with each other.
- (M) As part of a unit on immigration, the class participates in a simulation activity, such as immigrants arriving on Ellis Island. Directions to the “immigrants” are given by class members taking the roles of guards, doctors, nurses, immigration officials, and other personnel on Ellis Island.
- (M) As part of a unit on consumerism, the teacher helps students obtain free materials listed in the book *Free Stuff for Kids*. The teacher gives oral directions for students to find something they would like that is listed in the book and to copy the source. Then she conducts a mini-lesson on how to write a letter of request and directs students on how to complete, address, and mail their own letters. This activity can be adapted for students using *Free Stuff from the Internet* and e-mail.
- (M) Each student is given a piece of graph paper. The teacher gives directions for completing a complicated geometric shape. Each direction is given slowly and clearly but only once. Students try to complete the shape following the directions given by the teacher.
- (S) As one rehearsal strategy for the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), students follow oral directions for gridding the student identification page of their answer folder.
- (S) Students in a class prepare to serve as mentors to incoming freshman. Each of several groups develops a set of directions for one orientation activity the freshman will have to do, such as completing health forms, signing up for a locker, or trying out for a sport. Then groups role-play with each other to see whether the directions are clear and can be followed.
- (S) The teacher draws a design composed of several geometric shapes on a piece of paper. He then asks the class to duplicate the design by following his or her oral directions. Students may not see the original or ask questions while they are drawing. After the students have finished, they compare their work against the original to see how close their drawings are to the original.



8. Demonstrate comprehension of, and appropriate listener response (e.g., listening attentively) to, an oral report, discussion, and interview.

- (E) Children in the classroom are learning about the Author's Chair that their teacher has placed in the classroom. They learn that this is where they can read stories they have written to their classmates. They work together to develop a list of good listening behaviors that they all agree to follow during Author's Chair time.
- (E) While a teacher reads a story to his class, he periodically asks students to make predictions about what will happen next. Their responses indicate whether they were practicing effective listening.
- (E) Students listen to a story read by the teacher. Then, after discussing the plot and characters, the teacher reads the story again. This time, student volunteers pantomime the action. As a variation, student volunteers may improvise dialogue that presents essentially the same content as the story.
- (M) Students write open-ended stories. They take turns reading these aloud to the class. Students offer suitable story endings, indicating they have listened well.
- (M) After reading poetry by a number of popular poets, small groups of students prepare a three- to five-minute report on a favorite poet and present it to the class. Each group is responsible for developing four questions based on the report to be answered by classmates.
- (M) After a unit of study on the Holocaust, students participate as the audience for a question-and-answer session with an expert panel consisting of a rabbi, a concentration camp survivor or descendant, and the department chairperson of the local high school social studies department.
- (S) Students listen to a variety of professionals in a career field such as healthcare. After each talk, they list specific information they obtained about the careers, including job duties and responsibilities, job requirements, and benefits.
- (S) A teacher gives students oral directions that explain how to create a database for research projects they are doing. Students demonstrate their ability to follow oral directions as they perform each step on the computer. This may be done with an entire class in a computer lab or with groups or individuals in a single classroom.
- (S) Several students give book talks to their class. Based on what they have heard, each student writes his or her book choice and the reasons for this choice on an index card. The reasons listed indicate whether good listening skills have been used.



9. Give appropriate feedback to a variety of speakers.

- (E) After listening to their peers present oral reports, students complete evaluation forms that the class had previously developed. They then give their evaluations to each of the presenters. Each student writes a plan for self-improvement based on this feedback.
- (E) Students develop and pose questions for guest speakers (e.g., for a policeman explaining fingerprinting techniques, procedures, and purposes). Following the speaker's visit, the children discuss the answers to the questions with small groups and/or the whole class. Students then write letters thanking their guest and specifically mentioning what they learned that they found most interesting.
- (E) Students in one class arrange to be parent guides during back-to-school night. To gain confidence in this role, they role-play taking turns. Some students give directions to "parents" who ask how to reach particular locations.
- (M) Students observe an activity in which eight fellow students are seated in the center of the classroom. These students are involved in a discussion of a piece of literature that they have read. Meanwhile, the other students are seated outside this circle, observing the interactions and listening to the comments and verbal exchanges of the inner circle. At the conclusion of the inner circle's discussion, those who have been watching and listening offer specific feedback, such as summarizing the cogent points made by the group, expressing interest in specific comments and ideas, and asking for any needed clarification. This illustrates the "fishbowl" technique.
- (M) An author is invited to speak to the class. In preparation, the students have read the author's books and have prepared questions. The visit is videotaped. Afterwards, students view the tape and critique both their questions and the author's responses.
- (M) As part of a science study group, each student writes an inferential question as well as an answer for the question. Then, during group discussion, each student asks his or her question, selects a group member to answer the question, and responds to the accuracy of the answer with specific reference to the text.
- (S) Based on suggestions from students, parents who represent a variety of careers come to school for a career day. In small-group sessions, the parents speak with groups of students, who then move on to listen to other parent speakers. Afterwards, students make comparisons between the various careers. They write letters thanking the speakers and including reasons why a particular career sounded attractive.
- (S) Students listen to a speech given by a congressional representative in support of a controversial bill, such as farm subsidies. In preparation for this, students meet in small groups representing different perspectives (e.g., farmers, urban taxpayers, consumers, and a cereal board council) to brainstorm concerns their group might have on this topic. After listening to the speech, each group decides what responses to make to the speech and prepares a letter to a newspaper editor explaining those points.
- (S) As part of a unit on "New Jersey Writers Past and Present," pairs of students research the life and works of one writer, such as Joyce Carol Oates, Judy Blume, William Carlos Williams, or Anna Quindlen. Each pair prepares and delivers an oral presentation on the author. The other students listen and provide feedback that may include questions, comments, and/or corrections.

10. Recognize persuasive techniques and credibility in oral communication.

- (E) Students listen to a record, tape, or CD of some popular children's songs. They are asked to listen for sounds, besides the words of the songs, that help to convey the feelings of each song, such as birds chirping or children laughing. They are also encouraged to listen for sounds of instruments they might know. Afterwards, they compare what they heard.
- (E) Students create a commercial to sell a favorite book. This commercial is audiotaped and played for the entire class. The class listens and evaluates the persuasiveness of the commercial. Modifications are made, and the tapes are redone.
- (E) Each student is given two cards. One bears the word *Fact*, printed in red ink; the other *Fiction*, printed in blue ink. The teacher makes a series of statements. After each statement, the students hold up either the Fact card or the Fiction card. Teacher statements may refer to such subjects as new units, upcoming holidays, or current news events.
- (M) After listening to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, students are to identify persuasive techniques used by Dr. King, such as card stacking or connotative language.
- (M) Students are asked to watch TV commercials for two days and to keep a log in which they record sound effects (e.g., romantic music or rushing water) that are used to help promote products. They compare their findings and then suggest sound effects that would be effective for other products they know. Students work in groups to create commercials with some of these effects, using segments of existing audiotapes as sources for the sounds.
- (M) A teacher has audiotaped a number of television or radio commercials that represent the most common propaganda devices. Students are asked to listen to the tape and to identify each device, such as name calling, bandwagon, glittering generalities. Students then discuss how informed audiences might respond when they hear these commercials.
- (S) Students listen to and view infomercials to recognize persuasive techniques and assess the credibility of the salespeople. After students discuss their findings, they develop a checklist for rating the persuasiveness of the salespeople. They are then assigned to listen to more infomercials, using the checklist.
- (S) Students have learned some of the most common types of faulty logic used in arguments, such as drawing conclusions from insufficient evidence, using irrelevant issues as support, suggesting faulty cause-and-effect relationships, and appealing to emotions or to tradition. They listen to persuasive speeches, such as those given by candidates running for office, to identify examples of faulty logic.
- (S) Students prepare a persuasive talk either agreeing or disagreeing with the proposition that Ezra Pound was a traitor. As each student gives his or her talk, the listeners evaluate the logical arguments and persuasive techniques used.

11. Demonstrate comprehension of, and appropriate listener response to, ideas in a persuasive speech, an oral interpretation of a literary selection, interviews in a variety of real-life situations, and educational and scientific presentations.

- (E) Students write a review of a well-received speaker, performance, or any program presented at a school assembly. They compare their reactions, noting elements of the program that contributed to positive responses.
- (E) Students role-play a situation where they are trying to persuade someone to do something, such as persuading their parents to let a friend sleep over. Afterwards, the class comments on the effectiveness of the strategies that were used.
- (E) After children visit a science museum or watch a science-related film, they discuss how the information they obtained is related to their own lives.
- (M) Students attend a professional theatrical performance based on a novel they have read, such as *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster. After the performance, students discuss how the dialogue in the performance, including the tone, dialects, and pacing, contributed to maintaining the intent of the novel's author.
- (M) After brainstorming problems that middle schoolers try to solve, pairs of students select one problem to role-play in front of the class. Following the role-play, the other students ask questions based on what they have heard and seen in the situation.
- (M) For "Reading Day," students attend an assembly where students in other classes read poetry and prose they have written. After the assembly, the teacher discusses with her class their reactions to some of the works that were read and their recall of vivid phrases, lyrical lines, and effective characterization used by the student authors.
- (S) Students listen to three TV news reports about a significant event. They compare the focus represented in each of the three newscasts and then discuss reasons for the differences and the effects on the listener. They use this discussion as the basis for articles they write for the school newspaper.
- (S) After listening to and noting key ideas presented in an audiotaped speech by a noteworthy speaker, the students create collages that illustrate the speaker's main points. The collages are displayed in the classroom and analyzed for their effectiveness.
- (S) Students watch a television program they enjoy and describe in writing a situation on the program that is not logical. They then are asked to rewrite the situation so it makes sense. Finally, they discuss why TV situations are not always logical and how portraying the situation logically might affect the viewer.

12. Evaluate the credibility of the speaker.

- (E) Students listen to Jon Scieszka's story *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs as Told by A. Wolf*. They discuss whether the wolf's account of this event is credible and give reasons for their points of view.
- (E) Students are assigned to watch a TV program that most of them enjoy. The teacher asks them to pay attention to things that seem possible and those that seem impossible. During the discussion of their findings, the terms "fact" and "fiction" are reviewed.
- (E) After a class discussion about exaggeration and the reasons a listener should or should not believe a speaker, each student thinks of three statements to make about him- or herself. Two should be true, and one should be an exaggeration. As each student presents a statement, the others listen and raise their hands to show whether they think the statement is true or exaggerated.
- (M) Students are given a list of topics that are going to be discussed in a health symposium scheduled at the school. They are asked to reflect on the type of background someone should have in order to be considered an authority on each of the topics. When they attend the symposium, they are to take notes on the introductions to each speaker and on the speech content. Later, in class they discuss the extent to which each speaker was an authority on his or her topic.
- (M) As part of a unit on media, students develop a rubric for assessing the credibility of speakers. Criteria might include the speaker's educational background, expertise on the subject, style of presentation, and character.
- (M) After a discussion of athletes' credibility as advocates for products or political campaigns, students collect examples of such endorsements and bring them to class to share. Students discuss why they believed or did not believe what they heard in these endorsements.
- (S) Using a videotape of a trial from the *Court TV* channel, each student selects one witness to evaluate in terms of credibility using a predetermined list of criteria as a basis for judgment. In addition to the list, the evaluator writes a one-page summary statement explaining why the witness is or is not credible.
- (S) Students watch a segment of a news magazine show such as *60 Minutes*. Using a predetermined list of factors, they then analyze each of the interviews in the segment to determine the credibility of each of the speakers. Responses to the speakers are compared in class.
- (S) Students are given a list of statements that could provoke discussion about topics, such as "testing drugs on animals is not helpful to humans" or "cigarette manufacturers are taking advantage of people in third-world countries." Students are then asked to identify the kind of credentials the individual making such statements would need to have in order to be considered credible. Following this, students read editorials in *The New York Times* and note the information given about each author. They identify the writers they consider to be credible.

13. Evaluate media techniques and messages.

- (E) Students discuss television shows they enjoy watching and those they dislike. During the discussion, the teacher helps them create two charts. One is titled “Some TV shows are good because....” The other is titled “Some TV shows are bad because....” The charts are kept on view in the room, and children are encouraged to continue to think about these topics and to add to the charts as more ideas occur to the students.
- (E) Students collect examples of different words that advertisers use to get children and their parents to buy something. In class discussion, students share the words they have found. Their words can be displayed on a chart with the title “Words To Watch Out For.”
- (E) Students look at a page from a newspaper that features both news and advertisements. They compare the graphics used for each and discuss the reasons for the differences they find.
- (M) For a unit on advertising and persuasion, students collect a variety of print advertisements from magazines that appeal to different audiences, such as *Family Circle*, *Spin*, *Ebony*, and *Sports Illustrated*. Next, working in pairs, students analyze ads from the different magazines to identify persuasive techniques, both visual and written, and the types of products advertised. They then prepare an oral report with illustrations to present to the rest of the students. The class listens to each presentation and provides feedback on the clarity, completeness, and organization of the report.
- (M) Students create three- to five-minute video ads about their school. They use varied media techniques and messages. The videos are then viewed and evaluated with oral and written comments. The most effective videos are shown at back-to-school night.
- (M) For a unit on radio advertising and persuasion, students tape a variety of radio advertisements from different stations that appeal to different audiences. Then, working in pairs, students analyze the ads from the different stations for their persuasive techniques and for the types of products advertised.
- (S) Students examine television advertisements for movies with G and PG-13 ratings. They discuss the differences in the audiences addressed and the advertising techniques used for each type of rating.
- (S) Students use the Internet to analyze the websites of several colleges, technical schools, and universities that they might want to attend. Students then compare the amount and kind of information given for each school they review and the type of audience to whom each seems to be addressed.
- (S) Students listen to recordings of Mark Twain and analyze the humor Twain used to inform Eastern audiences about life in the Midwest. The study of speeches to entertain not only broadens student exposure to speech variety but also encourages their appreciation of public speaking as an art.
- (S) In a study of 20th-century American literature, students listen to tapes of Will Rogers’ radio talks, which provided both humor and commentary on life during the Depression. Afterwards, students discuss the dual purpose of such broadcasts.

